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United States Senate

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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

July 1, 2020

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Chairman
State, Foreign Operations, and Related
Programs Sub-Committee
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member
State, Foreign Operations, and Related
Programs Sub-Committee
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Graham and Ranking Member Leahy:

Thank you for your continued leadership on the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs. As you begin preparing the bill for fiscal year 2021, I respectfully request that you ensure sufficient funding for the U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) to uphold its commitments in its recent settlement agreement with the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) for the repair of the International Outfall Interceptor (IOI) in Nogales, Arizona.

The Nogales IOI is an 8.5-mile pipeline that travels from the U.S.-Mexico Border to the Nogales International Wastewater Treatment Plant in Rio Rico, Arizona. The pipeline, which began operating in 1972, has eroded and developed many cracks, causing raw sewage to flow into nearby washes and rivers, the streets of Nogales, and the DeConcini Port of Entry. Leaks from the pipe also increase the contamination risk for nearby groundwater sources. For years, ongoing litigation between the IBWC, ADEQ, and the City of Nogales have prevented necessary repairs from being conducted on the IOI.

Fortunately, on June 30, the IBWC and ADEQ announced a settlement agreement to resolve ongoing litigation and allow much-needed repairs to the IOI. This settlement agreement is a significant development for the Nogales community, and will guarantee that sewage will no longer flow into the streets of Nogales or close the DeConcini Port of Entry. I appreciate the willingness of the IBWC to engage in productive discussions with the local parties to allow for IOI repairs to move forward. I remain concerned, however, that long-term underfunding of IBWC projects by Congress could still delay critical IOI repairs.

Therefore, I request that the fiscal year 2021 State and Foreign Operations appropriations bill include a commitment to ensure the IBWC has the necessary resources to uphold its

commitments under the newly announced settlement agreement and ensure American border communities remain protected from exposure to raw sewage.

Thank you again for your important work and leadership on the subcommittee. I appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kyrsten Sinema", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator